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IDEIA MEMORANDUM #1A

TO: Special Education Supervisors
Assessment Personnel

FROM:  Joseph Fisher, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Special Education

SUBJECT: Responsiveness to Intervention (RTI) – Specific Learning Disabilities

DATE: August 30, 2005

This memorandum is to clarify the use of the Responsiveness to Intervention (RTI) process for the identification of Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs):

- Under IDEIA (2004), use of RTI for the identification of students with SLDs is a CHOICE made by the school system. Specific information regarding the development of instructional and formative assessment systems, where RTI is being utilized, may be found in the 5/26/2005 Memorandum and attachments (<http://www.state.tn.us/education/speced/seannounce.php> under the Memorandums heading).
- In selected schools where the RTI method of SLD identification is NOT USED, the *Specific Learning Disabilities Eligibility Standards* (State Board of Education Rule 0520-1-9-.01 (15) (m) "Disabilities" – attached and online at <http://www.state.tn.us/education/speced/seassessment.php#INITIAL>) shall be used for the identification of students with SLDs.
- After the release of the Federal Rules and Regulations for the 2004 IDEIA, the *Specific Learning Disabilities Eligibility Standards* will be revised for State Board Approval to reflect both RTI and Discrepancy Methods for the assessment and eligibility of students with SLDs.
- When students are identified as eligible for special education through the process using Responsiveness to Intervention, the assessment team should rule-out other disabilities (i.e., Mental Retardation) as the primary disability. Although there are no specific board-approved guidelines for the rule-out of other disabilities until the revision of the eligibility standards, a brief scale of intelligence, such as the Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence (WASI) or the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test – K-BIT, will be appropriate for this purpose. A brief measure of intelligence should be used in conjunction with the RTI data (collected throughout the RTI process) for review by the IEP Team when determining eligibility.